

*Scripture Proof for Provincial
Authority.* *History*

IN TWO
CHARGES *114*

Deliver'd to the

CLERGY

OF THE

ARCH-DEACONRY

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R Middlesex.

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SCRIPTURE PROOF

FOR

Provincial Authority.

Reverend Brethren,



PON the undoubted Principles of CHRISTIANITY, that Our SAVIOUR did not come to answer the vain Expectations of the *Jews* in a Temporal MESSIAH; nor did He come with any Design to give Disturbance to the Civil Politics of the World; but took them as He found them, and left them so too.

But that the grand Design of that Gracious Oeconomy, or Condescension of the Son of God, in taking upon him the Hu-

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man

man Nature, was, To give Mankind the Last, the Greatest, and the Fullest Manifestation of the Will of God, in Relation to the Reformation of the Sacred Polity; That however difficult the Peace and Happiness of this Life might prove, through the Pride, Ambition, and Worldly Interests of Men; yet those who would be his Followers in his Mediatorial Kingdom here on Earth, might be led into a certain Way and Method, how they might guide and conduct themselves, through all the Maezes and Difficulties of the Wilderness of this World, to their everlasting Peace and Happiness in the Heavenly *Canaan*.

These, I say, being apparently the Principles of this last Reformation of the Sacred Polity, which we call Christianity; we have from hence ventur'd to raise an Hypothesis, which I hope does by this Time carry a sufficient Self Evidence of its own Reasonableness along with it. *viz.* That Christianity enter'd the World without any Design of disturbing the Civil Politics of it; but, by its Principles, endeavour'd to improve, confirm, and strengthen, the Duties and Interests of them, in all Relations of Government, whether in the Magistrate or the Subject.

And therefore have from thence inferr'd, that this Spiritual Incorporation of the Christian Society, at its first Settlement in the
World,

World, must necessarily, upon these Principles, (to avoid all Appearance, or even Umbrage, of interfering with the Civil World) adapt and conform that external Authority, which was absolutely necessary for the well-being and good Government of it, to the same Model and Limits of Jurisdiction they then found the Civil World under.

And therefore after a short Enquiry into the State of the Civil World, as it then stood, we have found both the *Roman* and Eastern World, which at that time compriz'd all the known Parts of the habitable World, or *Οικουμένη*, (for *Africa* was then *Roman*) to have settled the Limits or Boundaries of their Jurisdictions in the *Provincial Method*, and therefore from thence have further ventur'd to assert, that

Provincial Authority was the First External settled Authority in the Church of Christ.

This is now to be further prov'd and illustrated by a double Enquiry into Fact. *viz.*

I. What Evidence or Footsteps we have of the Provincial Authority, within the Compass of the Sacred Canon.

II. What

II. What Improvements of it we meet with in the Apostolical and Primitive Ages immediately succeeding that, till it arriv'd at its full Perfection.

And here it may be remembred we have had occasion to mention a Distinction (which is obvious enough) between the Time of Conversion and the Time of Settlement; because there must be first a Conversion of the World to the Faith of Christianity, before there could be any Establishment of a Christian Society, this Distinction will necessarily require here a Recollection or Reconsideration, because the Compass of the Sacred Canon takes in only the Apostles Lives, it being concluded by St. *John's* Revelation, the longest Liver of them.

Now their Commission being confessedly Universal, and guided by the infallible Conduct of the Holy Spirit, promis'd to them by our Saviour himself, their Lives and Labours too, must be chiefly spent in the Conversion of the World to the Faith of Christ, and therefore within that Compass can expect to meet with only some Footsteps, some Intimations, , and leading Principles towards a full and thorough Establishment of that Authority which must be necessary for the good Government of the

the Christian Society when thoroughly Settled and Establiſhed, and yet we ſhall find even here very many, and ſome pregnant ones too, of the Provincial Authority.

To begin then with our Saviour's Commiſſion to his Apoſtles, this Commiſſion is the moſt fully deliver'd by St. *Matthew*, where we find it Prefac'd with this Character of Authority, ^a *All power is given me both in heaven and upon earth*, by which Characteriſtick Note of *A Given Power*, as has been already remark'd, cannot be meant the Divine Omnipotence, (for that he had always and eſſentially as God,) but that Power which does neceſſarily reſult from the mediatorial Kingdom, he was now at his Aſcenſion to be inveſted with, and was himſelf in Perſon to exerciſe in Heaven as Θεοάνθρωπος; God Man, for there is *one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus*; and therefore muſt leave the Miniſterial Functions of it here on Earth, to ſuch as ſhould be by himſelf authoriz'd for that purpoſe; And therefore we find St. *John* expreſſes this Delegation in theſe Terms, *As my Father ſent me ſo ſend I you*; but with this Promise *Lo! I am with you*, by the Grace, Influence, and Conduct, of the Holy Spirit, *unto the end of the world*. At which Time St. *Paul* tells us, the Me-

^a Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

diatorial *Kingdom* was again to be given up to the Father, that God [the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost] might be all in all.

Accordingly we find the Commission of this Power, to his delegated Substitutes here on Earth, contains these two general Parts.

1st. The Office or Duty they were Commission'd to, which was, to Disciple or Convert; to Teach, Instruct, Baptize, and consequently Govern those Disciples or Converts, according to the Rules, Laws, and Institutions of the Christian Faith, according as he had commanded them.

2^{dly}. It contains the Limits or Boundaries of that Jurisdiction they were commanded to exercise; they were to go εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη; or as St. *Luke* expresses it, εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, beginning at *Jerusalem*. Where the only Observation I would at present make, in relation to the immediate Enquiry now before us, is, that the Terms here made use of to express the Limits or Boundaries of their Jurisdiction, are such as the *Greek* Writers of the *Roman* Affairs (and such these Evangelists were) between the Age of *Augustus* and *Constantine*, do generally make Use of, when they would express the Limits or Boundaries of Provincial Jurisdictions, for ἔθνος in the *Greek* Writers does always mean what the *Latins* express by *Provincia*.

But

But this Observation will appear more plain in the Process of this Enquiry, particularly when we come to explain the thirty fourth Apostolical Canon; in the mean time let us proceed to enquire what further Force and Illustration this Intimation may meet with from the consequent Practice of the Apostles themselves, in the Settlement of these Nations or Provinces, after their Conversion of them to the Faith of Christ, within the Compass of the Sacred Canon.

Only it will be necessary to make this short Remark further, that after this Commission granted to them, St. *Luke* ^b tells us, our Saviour commanded them *not to depart from Jerusalem, but to stay there and wait for the promise of the Father which they had heard of him, ^c till such time as they should be endowed with power from on high.* With this and the Ascension immediately succeeding it, St. *Luke* closes the History of his Gospel, and from this Period he commences the History of his *Acts* of the Apostles; where immediately after a short Recapitulation of this Command, with the Ascension succeeding it, and filling up the Apostle's Place now vacant by the Death of the Traytor *Judas*. In the Beginning of his second Chapter he gives

^b Chap. xxiv. 49.

^c Joh. xiv.

us the History of the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, the promis'd Assistance of their departing Saviour, with the Gift of Tongues and Miracles, as necessary for the Arduous Work they were commission'd to, the Conversion of the World to the Faith of Christ, and the Government of it when settled in it.

Under this Divine Conduct then, which has been prov'd to be the only Universal and Infallible Conduct, we must now, without troubling our selves with the History of their Conversions, proceed directly to enquire after such Matters of Fact as do concern the Settlement of their external Government, when by their Conversions they had gathered Numbers sufficient for it, beginning first with the History of the *Acts* of the Apostles.

When St. *Paul* was vouchsafed a miraculous Conversion from being a zealous Persecutor, to become a zealous Christian. We find our Saviour tells *Ananias*, who was sent to illuminate both his Mind and Body, that he was a chosen ^d Vessel to bear his Name, ἐνώπιον Ἑθνῶν καὶ Βασιλέων, before Nations or Provinces, and Kings, or Governors of them, as well as before the Sons of *Israel*, and this we shall find abundantly made good of him in the Progress of his Story.

^d Acts ix. 15.

But

But for the more regular Enquiry from this General Commission of our Saviour to all the Apostles; and this particular one by the Mouth of *Ananias* to *St. Paul*, we may distinguish the Scripture-Evidence for Provincial Authority into these two Classes, or Kinds of Testimony.

1. Such as give some Account of the Civil Provincial Authority.

2. Such as lead us into the Settlement of Ecclesiastick Provincial Authority.

The first Notation of the Civil Provincial Authority we meet with within the Compass of the sacred Canon of the New Testament is, that remarkable one we meet with * by which the Birth of our Saviour was so providentially distinguish'd. *It came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.* Here are plain Indications of the Exercise both of *Roman* and Provincial Authority at that time in *Judea*, as both the Decree of *Cesar Augustus*, and the Mention of the Governor of *Syria* do shew us, for *Judea* was at that time reckon'd as a Part of that large Eastern Province.

* Luke ii. 1, 2.

B 2

But

But then to clear and vindicate this Passage of *St. Luke*, for even Sacred Writ is not free from the Cavils of some; It is objected that during the Life of *Herod* the Great, at the latter End of which this happened, The Subjects of *Judea* were not taxed by the *Roman* Officers, nor indeed were they till the Expulsion of his Son *Archelaus*, which happen'd about ten Years after his Death: And further, that at that time *Cyrenius*, or *Quirinius*, for so the *Latins* call him, was not Governor of *Syria*. These Cavils are built upon the Want of a due Attention to the original Text of the Evangelist; the Word *St. Luke* there makes use of for taxing is *Απογεγραψεν*, which does not signify the actual levying of a Tax, but what the *Romans* properly call'd *Census*, or *Æstimatio*, the Description or Enrollment of the People, setting down in Tables, their Ages, their Children, their Families, and Estates, so *Tully* ^f describes the Office of the Censors, *Censores Populi, Ævitates, Soboles, Familias, Pecuniasque censento*.

This was often done, both at *Rome* and in the Provinces in *Augustus's* Time, without the levying any Tax; for that was usually expressed by other Words, as *τίμωσις* or *Τιμήματα*, and the Officers appointed for the Assessment of it, were call'd *Τιμηταί*.

^f Lib. 3. de Leg.

But to what end then was this Description of the whole World made? In answer to which, it must be observ'd, That as our Saviour was not born, till the latter End of the Reign of *Herod* the Great; so neither was he born till *Augustus*, that Great and Wise Prince, had settled the *Roman* Empire in full Peace. The Temple of *Janus* was thrice shut in his Reign, which was the Signal of universal Peace to all the World; first, after the *Antiac* Victory, when he had reduced *Anthony* and all the East; a second time, after his *Cantabric* War, which was about four Years afterwards; the third time was in the 26th of *Augustus*, reckoning from his *Antiac* Victory, and the 33d of *Herod* reckoning from the Siege of *Jerusalem*, and Death of *Antigonus*, the Beginning of that Year, in the latter End of which our Saviour was born; and this Peace, as the Historians observe, lasted twelve Years, the longest Space we meet with in that unquiet Empire of the *Romans*; which was no doubt providentially design'd, that the Prince of Peace might come into the World, in as peaceable a Time as the Condition of it would then allow of.

Under these Intervals of Peace, when *Augustus* saw before him so plain a View of being Master of the whole World, as the *Romans* call'd it, he turn'd his Thoughts upon

upon taking a general Account of his extended Empire; in Order to which, he thought it necessary to make an universal Cense or *Æstimation* of his Subjects. The Nature of the Thing was well known in the City of *Rome*; it having been their constant Custom ever since the days of *Numa*, to do it every five years, and the Officers appointed for it were from thence call'd *Censores Populi*, always distinct from the *Prætor Urbanus* or Civil Governor of the City; nor was it always accompany'd with the actual levying of a Tax, but was such a Cense or *Æstimation*, as might serve for either the levying a Tax, or recruiting the Army as there might be Occasion.

For these Enrollments or *Æstimations* were laid up in the Publick Archives of the City, as we find not only *Tertullian* but even *St. Chrysostome*, so late as his time, appealing to this particular Cense, as then subsisting in the *Roman Archives*, for the Truth of our Saviour's Birth. This being then the Nature of the Cense, and this the Occasion of it; (for we find *Augustus* made this use of it, because he left behind him under his own Hand-writing what *Suetonius* calls, *Breviarium Imperii*, in which was contain'd, as *Tacitus* tells us, *Opes Publicæ. viz. Quantum civium sociorumque*

rumque in armis, quot classes, regna, provinciae, tributa, aut vectigalia, & necessitates ac largitiones. Quæ cuncta suâ manu perscripserat Augustus.) This I say being so.

Notwithstanding *Sentius Saturninus* was at that time President of *Syria*, yet *Cyrenius* or *Quirinius* might be employ'd upon this particular Service, for we find him at this time in the East, and when *Augustus* first extended that Business of the Cense to the Provinces (for it was first done in his time) *Dio*^b tells us, "Επιμειν Ἄλλης ἄλλῃ, Τάτε τῇ Ἰσολῶν, καὶ τὰ τῇ πόλεων ἀπογραφὰς. now the chief Merit of *Quirinius's* Actions arising from his Service in the East. (for he was at first but a private Citizen of *Lanuvium*, but as *Tacitus*^h tells us, for his Service in *Cilicia* he obtain'd a Triumph, was made Consul by *Augustus*, and when he sent his Grandson *Caius* into *Armenia*, was made his Governor) These Services necessarily suppose him to be very well acquainted with the Affairs of the East, and to be there about this Time.

It may be therefore reasonably supposed he might be employ'd in this particular Service by *Augustus*, and may give us further a very good Reason why, upon the Destruction of the *Social* Kingdom and Deposition of *Archelaus*, he was the Person then

^a A. U. C. 766.

^b Tacit. Lib. 3. c. 48.

employ'd

employ'd to put that Sentence in Execution. About Eleven years after this, when the Country of *Judea* was to be reduc'd into the strict Form of a *Roman* Province; because he knew best how to deal with that stiff-necked and obstinate People, as having before taken the Cense or *Æstimation* of them, and therefore was now first sent to be the President of *Syria*.

This may be, I hope, sufficient to clear *St. Luke's* Text, for the first Verse plainly refers to the Decree of *Augustus*; And the Second being plainly a Parenthesis, (which never means more than the Illustration or further Confirmation of what went before) may reasonably be construed to signify no more than *Cyrenius* actually levying that Tax, when he came to be President of *Syria*, sent on purpose to reduce *Judea*, to the strict Form of a *Roman* Province, which he knew from the Cense or *Æstimation* of them he had made before, they were able to bear, for which see ⁱ

The next remarkable Notation of the Civil Provincial Authority we meet with, is where *John* the Baptist's Entrance upon his publick Office is distinguish'd thus. ^k *Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of*

ⁱ *Act.* v. 37. *Joseph.* *Antiq.* lib. 18. c. 1. *Euseb.* *Eccles.* *Hist.* lib. 1. c. 6. ^k *Luke* iii. 1.

Judea,

Judea, and Herod [Antipas] being tetrarch of Galilee, And his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the High-Priests; the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Here are as plain distinguishing Marks of the *Roman* Civil Provincial Authority as it then stood in *Judea*, (as that word signifies the whole of that social Kingdom, which Herod the Great, by the Permission of *Augustus*, had enjoy'd, and by the same Allowance had at his Death by Testament divided among his Children) as any can well be given us; For here is first the Year of the Emperor *Tiberius's* reign, the fifteenth; which however the Chronologers may dispute from what *Epocha* to fetch it, whether from the Death of *Augustus*, or from his first being declar'd by *Augustus* and the Senate, *Consors Imperii*, which was 3 years sooner. Yet in this they all agree that it coincides with the 26th of the Present *Christian Era*; and do likewise further agree that *Dionysius Exiguus* who first settled that *Era*, did by mistake fix it 3 years later than the true Nativity; and therefore coincides with the 29th of our Saviour's true Age, and that there-

fore since the Word of the Lord came to *John* in the Wilderness, if we can suppose him to have spent some Part of that Year, in the collecting and instructing of his Disciples, before he enter'd upon the Office of Baptizing; or that our Saviour did not come to be baptiz'd by him, till such time as he had gathered the largest Number of People, that so his own Baptism might be the more publick and notorious, because it was to be attended, by that extraordinary Miracle of the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon him. This will verify what *St. Luke* tells us, that when *Jesus* came to be baptiz'd of *John*,¹ he began to be about thirty Years of Age, which was the Legal time prescrib'd^m the Levites for the entrance upon their publick Functions.

To go on then; *Pontius Pilate* being governor of *Judea*. Here the Word *Judea*, must be taken in its narrower Signification, as it comprehends only that Part of *Herod's* social Kingdom, which he left to his eldest Son *Archelaus*, viz. *Judea*, properly so call'd, and *Samarita*. This *Archelaus*, upon the Accusation of the *Jews* for Male-administration, being remov'd by *Augustus*, and banish'd to *Vienne* in *Gaul*; that Part had been ever since govern'd by *Roman* Procurators. *Coponius* was first settled there

¹ *Luke*. iii. 23.

^m *Num*. iv. 3.

by *Quirinius*, when he reduc'd *Archelaus's* Kingdom to the strict Form of a *Roman* Province, as has been above hinted. After him *Valerius Gratus*, and then *Pontius Pilate*, where we must at present leave him, till we meet with him again upon the Death of our Saviour.

The *Tetrarchs* and *High Priests*, are here mention'd, because those who were under their Power, had been Subjects of the *Jewish* Sovereignty in its largest Extent; and the *Jewish* Nation, even from the Conquest of *Pompey*, when they were first made tributary to *Rome*, were always reckon'd the most favour'd Part of the Province of *Syria*, and were distinguish'd from the rest, by that signal Privilege of being permitted, *Uti suis legibus*, to govern themselves by their own Laws; and therefore had no more than a *Procurator Caesaris* amongst them, to take Care of the *Roman* Interest, which was no doubt providentially design'd for the Support of that Religion God Almighty had appointed them, till the Messiah should come to be a Light to lighten the *Gentiles*, as well as to be the Glory of his People *Israel*.

This then was the State of *Judea*, when our Saviour enter'd upon his publick Office by the Baptism of St. *John*. We are next to enquire (the *Jews* being permitted the

Privilege of their own Laws under a *Roman* Procurator) how our Saviour behav'd himself in his publick Office, both in Regard to the Laws of his own Country, and those of the *Romans*.

When our Saviour came to offer himself to the Baptism of St. *John*, the Baptist knowing him to be the Messiah, the Sent, the Anointed of God, forbad him, saying, *I have need to be baptiz'd of thee, and comest thou to me!* But our Saviour answering him said, *Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.* This was our Saviour's general Reason to the Baptist, for submitting himself to all the Duties, Offices, and Observances, of that human Life he had undertaken, and accordingly we find him punctual in his Obedience to all Conditions of Authority, which that life had made him subject to.

He was obedient to his Parents; ⁿ as a *Jew* by Nation he paid the Didrachm or Tribute to the Temple, though he rightly argu'd that as he was the Son of God, he was not oblig'd to it, and prov'd his Argument in paying it ^o by a Miracle. In Regard to that Obedience which was due to the Civil Authority of the *Romans*, though he was accus'd by the false and unreasonable Clamour of the *Jews* as a Mover of Sedition to the

ⁿ Luk. ii. 51.

^o Matt. xvii. 23.

People, an Enemy to *Cesar*; yet he was clear'd from these Accusations, both by the Judgment of *Pilate*, who was then the Roman Procurator of *Judea* and *Samaria*, and by *Herod* who was by the Romans constituted *Tetrarch* of *Galilee*. For *Pilate* said to the Chief-Priests, Rulers^p and Poep^ele, *Ye have brought this man to me as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I having examin'd him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him; No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.*

Though therefore he was derided and despis'd by both of them as an abject *Galilean* in whom they could find no reason for the Suspicion of affected Empire; yet in their opinion he was no *Gaulonite*; and this even those who were his Accusers, could not otherwise than be sensible of: For when the *Pharisees* and *Herodians* took Counfel together, to entangle him in his Talk, under pretence of being just or righteous persons according to the Law of *Moses*, which was a Title affected by the *Gaulonites*, they insidiously put the *Gaulonitish* Question, Whether it was lawful to give Tribute

^p Luke. xxiii. 14, 15,

unto

unto *Cesar* or no? For that was the *Shiboleth* of *Judas* the *Gaulonite*, the *Pharisees* hoping by this means to find him tripping against the Law of *Moses*; or the *Herodians* against the Majesty of *Cesar*.⁹

But the Wisdom of his Answer was such as baffled their Design, and defeated all their Policy, for seeing the Tribute Mony bore the Image and Superscription of *Cesar*; (for so *Augustus* by the Advice of *Mecenas*^r had decreed, that all the Provinces should pay their Tribute in the *Roman* Coin) he therefore bids them *render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and unto God the things that are God's*; By this shewing them that the Spiritual Kingdom he was about to set up, was not design'd to injure either God or *Cesar*; but that those who would be Followers of and subject to it, not only might but ought to give both to God and *Cesar* what was their Due.

And yet the obstinate Malice of the *Jews*, by their repeated Clamours forc'd even an unwilling, and unconvinc'd, but for that Reason the more unjust *Pilate* to crucify their King. Thus it appears our Saviour was by distinguishing Providences born under the Provincial Authority of the *Romans*, liv'd in perfect Submission and Obedience to it, and dy'd by it. For the

⁹ Matt. xxii, Mark xii. Luke xx, ^r Dion. Cass.

Jews themselves confess, ^f It was not then lawful for them, to put any man to death.

This great Example of our Saviour we may easily believe led his Followers into the same Regard, for the Civil Establishments and Jurisdictions, as will appear plainer by a further Enquiry into the Truth and Fact of the first Settlement of Authority in the Christian Church.

For if we consider there were but ten days, between our Saviour's Ascension or final Departure from them, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, whose Office it was to : *teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them*; And withal consider the many infallible Convictions of the Truth of his Resurrection which they had receiv'd during the Forty days of his Conversation with them after it, we cannot reasonably admit of any Suspensions, that may or can induce us to believe, they could in so short a Space forget either the Example, or Commands of their Saviour, for he commanded them ^u to *tarry in Jerusalem till they were endow'd with power from on high*; And being assembled together with them he commanded them not to depart from *Jerusalem*, but to wait for the Promise

^f John xviii. 31. ^t John xiv. 26. ^u Luke xxii. 49.
of

of the Father, * *For ye shall be baptiz'd with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

Accordingly when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, as they ^r *were all together with one accord in one place, the Holy Ghost came upon them* in that wonderful Miracle of the Gift of Tongues, whereby they were enabled to propagate the Gospel Truth through all the different Nations and Provinces of the World; and this first Miracle we find converted in that one Day about three Thousand Souls, not only *Jews* but Profelytes of the Gentiles, who were come together to worship the True God at that solemn Feast, among whom were *Parthians*, and *Medes*, and *Elamites*, and the Dwellers in *Mesopotamia*, and in *Judea*, and *Cappadocia*, in *Pontus* and *Asia*, *Phrygia* and *Pamphylia*, in *Egypt*, and in the Parts of *Libya* about *Cyrene*, Strangers of *Rome*, *Cretes*, and *Arabians*, who all of them heard them speak the wonderful Works of God in their own Tongue.

Thus we find the Gospel was no sooner began to be preach'd, or propagated from *Jerusalem*, and the Word of the Lord came forth from Mount *Sion*, but we find it adapted to the National or Provincial Distinctions of Mankind, *For every man heard them speak in his own language.* And what

* Acts i. 4, 5.

^r Acts ii. 1.

is more remarkable, though this first Propagation was so universal, that it did at first out-run the Limits of the *Roman* Government, for one Third at least of these Nations or Provinces here reckon'd up, were not at that Time, within the Compass of the *Roman* Empire, as is plain of the *Parthians*, *Medes*, *Mesopotamians*, *Arabians*, and certainly the *Elamites*, for they were the Inhabitants of that Province of *Persia*, where the ancient Palace of *Susa* stood. Yet we find the Blessing was Provincially dispers'd amongst them, according to their Languages in their Nations. As the Curse had originally been at the Division of Tongues, and Dispersion of Nations at *Babel*², for their Rebellion against God, which is a plain Evidence the Church of God may be Catholick, or Universal, without being of one Language, or under one Monarch or earthly Head.

And though the Text tells us, that this great Number of Converts, of so many different Provinces, and different Languages,
² *continu'd steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.* The great Notes and Characteristicks, not of a newly gather'd, but of a well establish'd, well compacted Church or Society; and further that all that believ-

² Gen. x.

^a Acts ii. 42.

ed were together, and had all Things common, and parted to all as every Man had need, and so continu'd daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from House to House, and having Favour with all the People; so that by these means the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved. Yet these Halcyon Days did not last long, for the Ministration of this Service to such a growing Multitude, forc'd the Apostles to appoint other Officers, the ^b seven Deacons, for the Attendance of it, that they themselves might be more at Leisure to attend the Service of the Word of God. Upon which we are told the Word of God encreased, and the Number of Disciples multiply'd in *Jerusalem* greatly, and a great Company of the Priests were obedient to the Faith.

This rais'd the Malice and Fury of the unbelieving *Jews*, and certain of the Synagogue of the *Libertines*, and *Cyrenians*, and *Alexandrians*, and of them of *Cilicia*, (of whom *Saul* was one) and of *Asia*, arose disputing with *Stephen*, who was the first Deacon, but not being able to resist the Wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake, in their Fury ston'd him, and made him the Proto-Martyr. This Martyrdom of *St. Stephen*, happen'd, as Bishop *Pearson* ^c ac-

^b Acts vi. 2.

^c Annal. Paul.

counts, the latter End of the Year after our Saviour's Suffering, *i. e.* the 34th *Ær. vulg.* and the Fury of it was improv'd into a great Persecution against the Church which was at *Jerusalem*, and they were all scatter'd abroad throughout the Regions of *Judea* and *Samaria* except the Apostles; but when they were thus scatter'd, they carried their Faith with them, and went every where preaching the Word.^a

This therefore prov'd another providential Occasion of enlarging the Borders and Boundaries of the Church; for *Philip* the Deacon upon this Occasion, Discipled or Converted the *Samaritans*, and Baptized them, which when the Apostles who were at *Jerusalem* heard, they sent *Peter* and *John*, two Primary Apostles, to Confirm, and, by Imposition of Hands, give them the Holy Ghost. After this under the Conduct of the same Holy Ghost, St. *Philip* Converted and Baptiz'd the Eunuch of Queen *Candace*, and by him sent the Gospel into *Ethiopia*.

This Fury of the *Jews*, arising from the Disappointment of their vain, mistaken, temporal Expectations, gave still further Occasion to the provincial Enlargement and Propagation of the Gospel, for *Saul*^c yet *breathing out threatnings and slaughter a-*

^a Acts viii. 1,—4. ^c Acts ix. 1, 2.

gainst the disciples, went unto the high-priest, and desired of him letters to *Damascus* to the synagogue, that if he found any of this way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound unto *Jerusalem*.

This *Damascus*, was one of the chief Cities of *Syro-Phœnicia*, call'd by *Isaiah*^f the Head of *Syria*. It was indeed the Metropolis of the *Syrian* Empire, before the Building of *Antioch*, and after *Antioch* was built, upon the Divisions of the *Selucide* became it self a Kingdom under *Demetrius Eucharès*.

Here *Saul* was by Miracle made a Disciple, and when good old *Ananias* scrupled to assist the providential Disposition, as knowing him to have been a Blasphemer and a Persecutor, the Lord said unto him go thy way, for he is a chosen Vessel unto me, to bear my Name ἐν ὅπῳ ἔθνων καὶ βασιλείων, (as has been before remark'd) *i. e.* before Nations or Provinces, and Kings or Rulers of them, from hence he conferr'd not with Flesh and Blood, but being obedient to the heavenly Vision, retir'd into *Arabia Petraea*, where *Aretas* was then King, and govern'd *Damascus*, (having newly conquer'd it from *Herod*) by an Ethnarch or Provincial Governor of his own.

^f *Isa.* vii. 8.

Here

Here we may imagine a chosen Vessel could not be useless; and though St. *Luke* wholly omits this Journey into *Arabia*, and St. *Paul*^g himself only mentions it without giving any Account of his Employment there; yet we may well suppose he then laid the Foundation of that flourishing Church, we meet with in that Country so soon after the Apostles Times, and therefore Bishop *Pearson*^h allows him something better than two Years in that Recess.

In this Recess, 'tis generally agreed he receiv'd that Ecstatick Revelation he himself gives an Accountⁱ of, by which he was fully instructed in his Apostolical Office, and therefore upon his return to *Damascus*, we find him boldly engaging the Obstinacy of the *Jews*, even in their Synagogues, proving *Jesus* to be the Christ. This brought him into fresh Dangers, and to avoid their Fury, and the sordid Corruption of the *Arabian* Ethnarch, he was forc'd to quit the Place by a Statagem, ^k *for the Disciples took him by night and let him down by the wall in a basket*. From hence he came to *Jerusalem*, and there upon the same Argument engag'd the *Hellenistick Jews*, or *Grecians*; but they also went about to slay him, which when the Brethren knew they brought him down to Ce-

^g Gal. i. 17. ^h Annal. Paul. ⁱ 2 Cor. xii. ^k Acts ix. 25.

sarea,

sarea, and send him forth to *Tarsus* his own native Country, and the Metropolis of the Province of *Cilicia*: Thus, and by these Providences was fulfill'd, what the Lord said to *Ananias*, he is a chosen Vessel, to bear my Name before the *Gentiles*, and Kings, and the Children of *Israel*.

Then St. *Luke* tells us, the Churches had Rest throughout all *Judea*, and *Samaria*, and *Galilee*, and were edify'd, and in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiply'd. This Opportunity St. *Peter* took to visit and confirm the Churches, and as he pass'd through all Quarters, he came to *Lydda*, *Saron*, and *Joppa*, Maritime Towns of *Cæle-Syria*, and there by Miracles much improv'd the Number of Believers; this Visitation produc'd the Conversion^l of *Cornelius*, the first Fruits of the *Gentiles*, which cost St. *Peter* upon his return to *Jerusalem*, an Apology to the Brethren for conversing with the *Gentiles*.^m

From hence St. *Luke* resuming his Argument, proceeds toⁿ shew us how the *Jewish* Persecutions were providentially design'd for the Propagation of the Gospel. They which were scatter'd abroad upon the Persecution that arose about *Stephen*, travelled as far as *Phænice*, and *Cyprus*, and *Antioch*, preaching the Word unto none but unto

^l Acts x, ^m Acts xi. 17, 18. ⁿ — ver. 19.

the *Jews* only ; (having not yet heard of what happen'd to *St. Peter* in the Case of *Cornelius*, or to *St. Paul*, who by the Spirit was gone to *Tarsus*, and as himself ^o tells us, went into the Regions of *Syria* and *Cilicia*, but had not as yet come to *Antioch*) upon these Tydings the Church at *Jerusalem* sent forth *Barnabas*, that he should go as far as *Antioch*, who when he came and saw the Harvest great, departed to *Tarsus* to seek *Saul*, who now came first to *Antioch*, and continu'd there a whole Year, where the Disciples were first call'd *Christians*, and was from thence sent with *Barnabas* to relieve the Brethren in *Judea*. ^p

Now about this Time, *Herod Agrippa*, stretch'd forth his Hand to vex certain of the Church ; this Persecution produc'd the Martyrdom of *St. James* the Great, and the Imprisonment of *St. Peter*, with the same Design, but the Angel of the Lord miraculously rescu'd him, and this first drove him from *Jerusalem*, for tis said ^q *he departed and went to another place*. But *St. Luke* not saying whither, some would have it to *Rome*, though it seems to be more probable he did not leave the *East*, but took this Opportunity of preaching the Gospel to those *Northern Asiatick* Provinces of *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Asia*,

^o Gal. i. 21. ^p Acts xi. 30. ^q Acts xii. 17.

and

and *Bithynia*, to whom he afterwards sent his two Epistles; because not long after *Herod's* Death, as soon as the Provincial Governor of the *Romans*, *Cuspius Fadus*, had enter'd upon the Province, we meet with him again at the Council of *Jerusalem*.

Barnabas and *Saul*, upon their return to *Antioch* from *Jerusalem*, were ^r separated by the Holy Ghost for the propagation of the gospel, and sent away first to *Seleucia*, then to *Cyprus*, where they converted *Sergius Paulus*, Governor of the Province: From thence they came to *Perga* in *Pamphylia*, from thence to *Antioch* in *Pisidia*; here they first declar'd against the Jewish Obstinacy, ^r and began to preach to the Gentiles. From hence being persecuted by the Jews they came to *Iconium*, the Metropolis of *Lycaonia*; being hence persecuted by the Jews, they fled to *Lystra* and *Derbe*, other Cities of *Lycaonia*, and preach'd to the Region round about; from thence returned to *Lystra*, *Iconium*, and *Antioch* of *Pisidia*, confirming the Disciples, and ordaining them Elders or Bishops in every Church or City; when they had thus passed throughout *Pisidia*, they came to *Pamphylia*; from thence went down into *Attalia*, and thence sailed to *Antioch* in *Syria*, where gathering

^r Acts xiii. 4.

^r Ibid. 46.

the Church, they told them ² how *God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.*

At this Time the Controversy about legal Ceremonies arose, and *Paul* and *Barnabas* were sent to *Jerusalem* to the Apostles and Brethren concerning it, there they met with St. *Peter* again, and all agreed to determine it in favour of the *Gentiles*; St. *James* the Less presiding in the Council as Bishop of *Jerusalem*, the Decretory Epistle was directed to the Brethren of the *Gentiles* in *Antioch*, and *Syria*, and *Cilicia*. This settled the Controversy at *Antioch*, and *Paul* and *Barnabas* determined to visit the Churches they had gathered, and confirm the Brethren: But a Contention arising about *John*, surnam'd *Mark*, they parted; and *Barnabas* took *Mark* and sailed to *Cyprus*; *Paul* chose ^a *Silas*, and went through *Syria* and *Cilicia* confirming the Churches. In this Visitation St. *Paul* took *Timotheus* for the Companion of his Labours, and as they went through the Cities delivered them the Decrees, ordained of the Apostles and Elders, and so the Churches were establish'd and increas'd.

And when they had gone throughout *Phrygia*, and the Region of *Galatia*, were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in *Asia*, nor were they suffered to come to

² Acts xiv.

^a Acts xv.

Mysia or *Bithynia*, and so came down to *Troas*, where a Vision appeared to St. *Paul*, a Man of *Macedonia*, saying, Come over into *Macedonia* and help us. So loosing from *Troas*, they came to *Samothracia*, and the next Day to *Neapolis*, and from thence to *Philippi*, which is the chief City of that Part of *Macedonia*, and a Colony. For *Macedonia* was so large a Province, it was divided into two Parts, *Macedonia prima* & *secunda*, *Thessalonica* the Metropolis of the one, *Philippi* of the other; being driven hence by Persecution, they ^b pass'd through *Amphipolis* and *Apollonia*, and came to *Thessalonica*, the other Metropolis of *Macedonia*. After a Church established there, to which St. *Paul* writes two Epistles afterwards; forced by the Persecution of the *Jews*, *Paul* and *Silas* retired to *Berea*, and there made (because they were more noble than those of *Thessalonica*) a large Conversion; but being still pursued by the Malice of the *Jews* of *Thessalonica*, St. *Paul* was forced to retire to *Athens*, leaving *Silas* and *Timotheus* behind him, commanding them however to come to him with all Speed. ^c

Here at *Athens* ^d he converted *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*, who was afterward Bishop

^b Acts xvi. 4,---12. ^c Acts xvii. 1,---15. ^d Acts i. 34.

of *Athens*, and *Damaris* and some others, and so departed from *Athens* and came to *Corinth*. This was then the Metropolis of the Province of *Achaia*, where *Gallio* the Brother of *Seneca*, was at that Time Proconsul, Here *Silas* and *Timotheus* came to him from *Macedonia*, and here he made his last Denunciation against the Obstinacy of the *Jews*,^e *Henceforth I will go to the Gentiles*; here also he tarried a good While, because the Lord had told him he had much People in this City, then took Leave, sail'd back into *Syria*, took with him *Priscilla* and *Aquila*, but left them in his way at *Ephesus*, from thence sail'd to *Cæsarea*, came to *Jerusalem*, saluted the Church, and after the Feast, returned to *Antioch* in *Syria*.

From thence he again visited the *Asiatick* Churches, going over all the Country of *Galatia* and *Phrygia* in Order, strengthening, *i. e.* confirming all the Disciples. In the mean Time *Apollos* a learned and eloquent Man of *Alexandria*, being better instructed by *Priscilla* and *Aquila* at *Ephesus*, came with commendatory Letters into *Achaia*, and ^e *helped them much who had believed through Grace*, whilst *Apollos* was thus employ'd in *Achaia*; St. Paul having past through the upper Coasts came to *Ephesus*, where he abode for two Years

^e Acts xviii. 1,---6

----- ver. 27.

disputing in the School of one *Tyrannus*, so that all they which dwelt in *Asia* (for *Ephesus* was the Metropolis of the Provincial or Pro-consular *Asia*) heard the Word of the Lord both *Jews* and *Greeks*.^g

From hence he sent *Timotheus* and *Erastus* into *Macedonia*, but he himself stayed in *Asia* a Season; and when the Up-roar about *Demetrius*^h and his Craftsmen was over, *St. Paul* departed to go into *Macedonia*,ⁱ and when he had gone over those Parts with much Exhortation, he came into *Greece*, and there abode three Months, confirming the Churches of *Achaia*. After this he determined by Pentecost to be at *Jerusalem*, and therefore went by Sea, only stopping at *Miletus*, he sent to *Ephesus* for the Bishops of Provincial *Asia* to come to him there, where he gave his last Charge, commanding them to ^k *take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost, had made them overseers, to feed the church of God which he had purchas'd with his own blood.*

The remaining Part of *St. Luke's* History is taken up with *St. Paul's* Journey to, and Troubles at *Jerusalem*, where he was forced to appeal to *Cæsar* to save himself from the bloody Designs of the *Jews*, and

^g Acts xix. 1,---10. ^h --- ver. 22. ⁱ Acts xx. 1.
^k --- ver. 28.

when

when *Portius Festus* came into the Province was by him sent to *Rome*, where *St. Luke* ¹ leaves him *in his own hired house for two whole years, receiving all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.* Thus far *St. Luke*.

But *St. Paul* himself tells us of his further Designs ^m westward. This Epistle was written to the *Romans*, (when as yet ⁿ *He had not seen them, but had often desired it.*) from *Corinth*, when he was about to sail to *Jerusalem*, to carry to the distress'd Brethren there, the Contributions of *Macedonia* and *Achaia*; and therefore tells them in this xv. Chapter, what Success he had had among the Gentiles; so that from *Jerusalem* and round about unto *Illyricum*, (which signifies here, not what it did after *Constantine's* new Model, a fourth Part of the Empire, but only the single Province of *Illyricum*, bordering upon the *Adriatick* Gulph) viz. That so far he had *fully* preach'd the Gospel, yet so as not to interfere with any other Apostle, lest he should build upon another's Foundation; for when he attempted to go into *Bithynia*, ^o *the Spirit forbad him*, probably because it was one of the Provinces

¹ Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

^o Acts xvi. 7.

^m Rom. xv.

ⁿ Ibid. i. 13.

belong,

Belonging to St. *Peter's* Apostolical Office, for he telis them he did not build upon another Man's Foundation, having therefore no more Place in those Parts, he tells the *Romans*, ^p *When I take my journey into Spain I will come to you.* But now I go to *Ferusalem* ^q to minister unto the Saints; and again, ^r when I have perform'd this, I will come by you into *Spain*.

This Expedition into *Spain* was undertaken (as all agree) after his first Deliverance from his Accusers before *Nero*. And they generally allow about five Years Time, between that and his last Apprehension and Martyrdom, which might give him Time to visit the West, as diligently as he had done the East. Accordingly St. *Clement* of *Rome*, whom he calls his Fellow-Labourer, gives this general Account of his Labours in the West as well as the East. ^s Κήρυξ γενόμενος; ἐν τῇ Ἀνατολῇ, καὶ ἐν τῇ Δύσει, τὸ γενναῖον καὶ Πίστεως αὐτοῦ Κλίμα ἔλαβεν, διηκουσίῳ διδάξας ὅλον τὸ κόσμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ πέρα καὶ Δύσεως ἰδὼν, καὶ ὑποτίθεται ἐπὶ τῇ Ἠγεμύνῳ. From which Passage and Length of Time allow'd for his western Labours, our learned Bishop *Stillingfleet* ^t makes a very probable Conjecture, That St. *Paul* might visit the Provinces both of *Gaul* and *Britain*, because they were at that Time very well known to

^p Rom. xv. 24. ^q Ibid. ver. 25. ^r Ibid. ver. 28.
^s Clem. Epist. iii. p. 13. Ed. Oxon. ^t Orig. Brit. ch. 1.
the

the *Romans*; and the Τέρμα τῆς Δύσεως might well be extended to the *Extremi Hominum Morini*, and the *Ultima Thule*, known to be even under *Augustus*, one of them the most Northern Border of *Gaul*, the other of *Britain*.

Thus far the Historical Part of the Canon of the New Testament has led us, in an Enquiry after the first original Settlement of Provincial Authority. There are further Arguments may be drawn from the Apostolical Epistles, the Revelations of St. *John*, and the concurrent Sentiments of the Primitive Fathers for the first 300 Years. But this we must refer to another Consultation.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PAG. 25. l. 15. read, originally. p. 28. l. 20. for Βασιλέον, read, Βασιλείον. p. 30. l. 1. for, send, read sent.



